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20 SEP 1968

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Deputy Director for Plans

**SUBJECT:** Senior Operations Seminar

**REFERENCE:** Your Memorandum of 12 September 1968,  
Subject as above (DDP 8-3198)

1. The following comments are in response to referent memorandum.
2. We welcome the idea of a senior operations seminar, but we think the OTR concept suffers from misplaced emphasis on management, tradecraft, organization and inter-agency relationships. We believe it is unrealistic in terms of the length of the proposed seminar, in its apparent duplication of parts of existing courses, and above all in the basic purpose which, in our view, the seminar should serve.
3. We believe the seminar will be most valuable if it provides a vehicle for the exchange of ideas and experience, a forum for constructive and imaginative discussion by highly competent senior operational personnel of existing weaknesses in the CS performance of its operational mission. We think the seminar should be designed to concentrate on increased CS effectiveness in the field of operations, pinpointing problems and seeking solutions. A good point of departure would be the DEFICIENCIES outlined in the most recent annual report to the PFIAB. That list could easily be both enlarged and refined, to provide ample grist for this mill, from which we could reasonably expect to get some chaff but also some fine white flour.

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4. Careful selection of seminar participants, on the basis of experience, demonstrated competence and an imaginative and constructive approach to the problems which stand in the way of our optimum effectiveness, should go far toward assuring positive results. Reduction of the seminar to two weeks should permit even very senior officials to attend. Holding the seminar at [redacted] ( [redacted] at Headquarters) should avoid interruptions and other distractions. Advance announcement of several carefully chosen topics, approved by the DDP, would enable participants to do some prior and specific thinking on the subjects to be discussed at a given seminar. To derive maximum profit from the seminar, we believe that salient points in the discussions - both pro and con - should be recorded in summary form and that one or more of the subjects discussed should be treated in team papers or committee reports or individual submissions (to include minority reports by dissenting participants, or contributions on subjects other than those specified).

5. We believe the approach outlined above will stimulate thinking, encourage the exchange of perhaps little known but valuable experience, raise questions as to the validity of current procedures and techniques and objectives and priorities, lead to new ideas and new approaches. We believe it will contribute greatly, even if only gradually, to general improvement in the quality of CS operations and quite possibly to important operational breakthroughs.

15/ [redacted]  
for  
Chief, Missions and Programs Staff

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